

REMARKS

By this Amendment After Final, Applicants propose canceling claim 23 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amending claims 19 and 20. No new matter has been added.

In the Final Office Action dated May 2, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 19 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sillmon (U.S. Patent No. 6,325,390); allowed claims 1-18 and indicated that claims 20-22 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the subject matter recited in the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowed claims and allowable subject matter. Applicants have proposed canceling claim 23 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amending claims 19 and 20, thereby obviating the rejection of those claims. To the extent, however, that the Examiner may consider applying the above-mentioned rejection to amended claim 19, Applicants respectfully submit that such rejection would be improper since the Sillmon reference fails to disclose all of the subject matter recited in Applicants' amended claim 19. See M.P.E.P. § 2131.

Applicants' invention as recited in amended claim 19 is directed to a method for making a wafer stage chamber assembly, the wafer stage chamber assembly having a first portion and a second portion. The method includes connecting the first portion and the second portion via a U-shaped connecting member and disposing a sealing member that contacts to at least one of the first portion and the second portion so that a pressing portion of the sealing member creates a sealing engagement of the chamber after connecting the first portion and the second portion.

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The Sillmon reference does not disclose at least a method for making a wafer stage chamber assembly. The Sillmon reference discloses sealing arrangements for vacuum flanged tubing connections. Therefore, at least the above-recited subject matter is not disclosed in the Sillmon reference.

For at least the reasons set forth above, claim 19, if amended as proposed, should be allowable. Dependent claims 20-22 depend from claim 19. Consequently, those dependent claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 19 is allowable.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-22 in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments to claims 19 and 20 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment After Final should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the Final Office Action by the Examiner presented new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that entering the Amendment After Final would allow Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that entry of the Amendment After Final would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

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In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment After Final, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation might advance prosecution, the Examiner is cordially invited to call Applicants' representative at 571-203-2739.

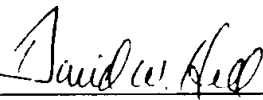
Applicants respectfully submit that the Final Office Action contains numerous assertions relating to the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether those assertions are addressed specifically herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to them.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 29, 2003

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